How to Build a Good Relationship with Your Child’s Teacher

Nothing is as important as building a good working relationship with your child’s teacher; “It’s the best gift you can give your child”.

Your child will thrive in school if you can create a ‘circle of support’ that includes the three of you (your child, her teacher and you). The more freely information flows back and forth between home and school, the better your child will feel about learning.

The circle of support needs to be especially strong when your child first starts school, but it will remain important throughout high school years. Here are some ways to build and sustain good communication with your child’s teacher.

Get to know the teacher right away. It’s best to talk to the teacher before a problem surfaces, although some teachers might want to wait until the first parent conference to meet, try to arrange at least a quick conversation at the beginning of the year. Make it casual; briefly introduce yourself and your child to the teacher and mention any special concerns. Let your child see you speak to her teacher, or tell her that you did. Children feel safe when the important adults in their lives work together.

Keep in regular touch. Use your first meeting to create a plan for staying in regular contact throughout the year.

Say thank you. Pass along compliments as well as suggestions and criticism. Everyone appreciates a kind word. If your child comes home bubbling over with how much fun school was that day, let the teacher know. Thank her when she shows special sensitivity toward your child or pays him extra attention.

Stay involved with the class. Even if you work full time, you can still help. A small gesture goes a long way to show you care.
You could collect art supplies for a class project; you could call parents about upcoming events. Your child’s teacher will appreciate your help and make note of your willingness to be involved.

**Talk about school at home.** Ask your child about school every day. Questions such as ‘how was school?, are too vague. Try to ask specific questions, such as “Is your friend Michael back in school today?” of “Were you able to go for a walk today or was it too rainy?” Children are more likely to answer these questions and you can use this information when talking with the teacher.

**Be discreet but take action if problems arise.** If you are upset with the teacher, take steps to address your feelings with her as soon as possible. Don’t criticize her in front of your child. He’s attached to both of you and if he feels in the middle of your dispute, it could make him anxious.

**Respect the chain of command.** If you have a serious concern about your child of the class, speak to the teacher first. Arrange a problem-solving or brainstorming meeting in which you and the teacher try to work out the issue. If you’re still unhappy let the teach know that you want to continue the discussion with her supervisor. By including the teacher in future discussion, you are being respectful of her relationship with your child.

**Remember what PARENT stands for:** *Partner;* be there for your child and her teacher; help your child prepare for school at home and keep abreast of school events. *Advocate;* work for change in the classroom if you are unhappy with the staff or curriculum. *Resource;* help your child by providing her teacher with information about her. The more she knows about your child’s home life, the more she will be able to help her learn. *Encourager;* support your child and his teacher, believe in them and compliment jobs well done. *Negotiator;* be willing to talk, be open to finding innovative solutions. *Team Member;* do your share of the work; teachers can’t fix everything themselves. A child’s education takes place at home too.